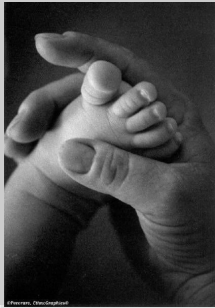


May 2, 2008



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

FIRST STEPS

KENTUCKY'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

TOTS Update

The Gateway/FIVCO District, Bluegrass District and KIPDA District have been identified as pilot sites for the training and initial roll out of TOTS. The pilot sites were selected based on their proximity to Frankfort for ease of technical assistance as well as their POE agent status (we wanted to assure both a health department and comp care center administrative agent). We anticipate that pilot site service coordinators and providers will be trained on TOTS in early to mid August, 2008.

Pilot sites will participate in the evaluation of the functionality of the TOTS system. Feedback from pilot site experiences will be provided to the TOTS design team for consideration and remodeling, if necessary.



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

2009-2010 Contract Renewal Update

2009-2010 contract renewals are coming in at a faster pace than they had two years ago. Thanks to all providers who are working diligently to get their contracts renewed sooner rather than later. Here are a couple of things to remember based on phone calls that Jackie Neal is getting:

- Please make sure you are submitting the correct renewal forms. 2009-2010 renewal forms have been updated.
- **All renewal forms are located on the First Steps website homepage** (<http://fs.chfs.ky.gov>).
- We have moved them to the right side of the page for easier access.



Please mail complete contract packets to:

Jackie Neal
First Steps Program
275 E. Main Street
HS2W-C
Frankfort, KY 40621

APR Update

As most everyone knows, the FFY 2006 APR was submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs on January 31, 2008. This year OSEP provided states with a preliminary status report on the APR and a short window of time during which the state could correct or clarify information in the APR.

Kentucky received its preliminary report on April 7th. Minor clarifications and corrections were requested and made. The revised APR was resubmitted electronically on April 14th, as required. The revised APR will replace the original FFY 2006 APR on the First Steps website (<http://fs.chfs.ky.gov>).

All changes are tracked so readers can easily identify clarified or corrected information.

Though not official, we anticipate that OSEP will issue state Determinations the first week of June.

You may recall that Kentucky was



determined to "Need Intervention" last year following OSEP's review of

the FFY 2005 APR. States may be designated as "needs intervention" for 3 consecutive years before federal enforcement actions are taken, including but not limited to withholding or recovering federal program funding.

Central Office staff are currently reviewing FFY 2006 (state FY 2007) District (EIS program) data in order to make District Determinations. District data must be reported to the public annually. District Determinations are not required to be posted publicly and Kentucky has elected not to post them publicly again this year. FFY 2006 District data should be available for posting in mid-May and District Determinations will be made shortly thereafter.

May is National Physical Fitness Month *Get Fit for Summer, Take the Governor's Challenge*

Media Contact: Gwenda Bond or Beth Fisher, (502) 564-6786, ext. 3325 and 4012

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 28, 2008) - With summer around the corner, May is the perfect time for Kentuckians to adopt a more active lifestyle.

As part of National Physical Fitness Month, Get Healthy Kentucky is encouraging all residents of the commonwealth to take the Governor's Challenge to become more physically fit – an important step in maintaining good health.

"With the warmer weather, there's more opportunity to be outdoors and be physically active," said William Hacker, M.D., Health and Family Services' acting undersecretary for health and public health commissioner. "Get Healthy Kentucky was created to help Kentuckians make a commitment to their personal health. The Governor's Challenge is a great program to help you get in shape and headed down the path of life-long wellness."

All it takes is 30 minutes of activity a day (60 minutes for kids ages 6-17), five days a week for six weeks. Participants who log on to the Governor's Challenge at www.gethealthy.ky.gov will be redirected to the national President's Challenge home page where they can sign up for an account and start monitoring progress via the personal activity tracker.

To register or learn more about the Governor's Challenge, visit gethealthy.ky.gov and click "Take the Challenge."

Get Healthy Kentucky is a statewide wellness initiative that incorporates physical activity, nutrition and tobacco cessation and prevention components. GHK has created an opportunity for individuals and groups to have a one-stop, central location for information and resources that will improve the quality of life for Kentuckians and help prevent chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease.

GHK is designed for residents of all ages and includes access to reliable, unbiased information on the GHK Web site, www.gethealthy.ky.gov. The site provides information about the Governor's Challenge program, an incentive-based fitness program designed to help participants set personal fitness goals and track progress online.

To date, around 6,500 people have participated in the challenge.

"We're thrilled by the great participation and enthusiasm we've seen for the Governor's Challenge," said Amberlee Nickell, assistant director of Get Healthy Kentucky. "Our goal is for all Kentuckians – regardless of age or activity level – to sign up and make physical activity and good nutrition a part of their lives."

Through the Governor's Challenge, participants will be able to choose how to become and remain physically active. GHK has provided more than 100 activities from which to choose, along with the capability to track progress on an activity log. Once the initial goal is met, there are additional levels of achievement - bronze, silver and gold.

May 9, 2008



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY



TOTS Update

Much of this week's time – as well as last week and the weeks before that – has been spent working on “edits” in TOTS. (That's my word – not exactly technical jargon) Edits are features that tell the system what is and is not permitted within a particular function. For example, the Date of Birth field may have an edit that says any date entered that is more than three years older than today's date will not be permitted. This particular edit is to prevent users from entering children into the system who are over the age of three. This edit may also help users identify an incorrect date of birth (i.e. the user entered 2004



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

instead of 2007). The Date of Birth field may also have an edit that says future dates will not be permitted. This is another edit to help the user identify a data entry error on the child's Date of Birth.

In order to assure the accuracy of the information (data) in TOTS (as well as the accuracy of provider claims, provider payments and federal reports), the system must contain edits that prevent the entry of “bad” data

and alerts that tell the user what data is “bad” and what to do to correct it. Remember, edits are our friends, and though it may be difficult, keep this in mind the 3rd or 4th time your computer buzzes and tells you to correct something seemingly innocuous.

Part C Federal Grant Application

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services posted the Part C Federal Grant Application for Federal Fiscal Year 2008 on March 7, 2008. The Application was available for review on the First Steps website from Friday, March 7, 2008 through Tuesday May 6, 2008. The Application was open for public comment from Friday, March 7, 2008 through Monday, April 7, 2008. No comments were received. The Application was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs at the close of business on May 6, 2008.

Watch for a First Steps Public Service Announcement

on television beginning next week.

You may hear it on the radio too!



Call for Pictures

For anyone who has never had the pleasure of visiting Central Office, let me provide a brief description. Our space epitomizes state government. Designed for efficiency (believe it or not) and not comfort. We live in cubies with walls that, thankfully, extend an inch or two above my head – though not above the heads of some of those working around me. We are surrounded by beige, but for my olive green desk and credenza from 1979, and due to internet restrictions and solid brick walls, we lack quality radio reception and instead rely on the conversations of those co-workers with far more interesting lives

(HANDS, Early Childhood Mental Health, Newborn Screening) to brighten the afternoons.

I'd like to brighten the space – and what better way than to post pictures



of the little people who have bright-

ened our lives. I'm working on a First Steps Wall of Fame and I'd like to include pictures of children who have participated in the First Steps program (with parent consent, of course). If you're a parent and you'd like to share a favorite picture of your little one – or you know a parent who'd like to share a favorite picture of their little one, please send them to me.

My wall is waiting ...

E-mail me at Kirsten.hammock@ky.gov or snail mail me at 275 E. Main St., HS2W-C, Frankfort, KY 40621.

May is Mental Health Month: Celebrate Children's Mental Well-Being!

You may not realize it, but chances are a child or adolescent you know has a serious mental health need. In fact, mental health problems affect one in five young people.

Mental health problems are painful—emotionally, spiritually and socially—especially for children and adolescents. Words that make fun of mental health create a sense of shame, feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem. Children and adolescents exposed to such a negative view of themselves feel rejected, lonely and isolated. For a child with a mental health problem, this "stigma" is often the greatest barrier to a complete and satisfying life.

But you can help. There are many things that parents and caregivers can do to support children's emotional health and well-being. Make a commitment to help the children and adolescents in your life. May—officially recognized as "Mental Health Month" by Congress since 1949—is the perfect time for parents and caregivers to focus on children's and adolescents' mental health. You can demonstrate your support for Mental Health Month by:

- **Learning more about mental well-being in children.**
- **Celebrating the accomplishments and strengths of children.**
- **Fostering self-worth and independence in chil-**

dren.

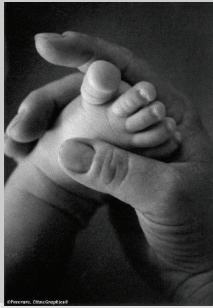
- **Helping children express their feelings.**
- **Promoting mutual respect and trust.**
- **Recognizing the strengths in all children.**
- **Appreciating each child's uniqueness.**
- **Encouraging individual talents.**
- **Helping children set goals based on their abilities and interests.**
- **Showing confidence in their ability to handle problems and tackle new experiences.**

The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign is part of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families of the federal Center for Mental Health Services. Parents and caregivers who wish to learn more about mental well-being in children, please call 1-800-789-2647 (toll-free) or visit the Web site at mental-health.samhsa.gov/child to download a free publications catalog (CA-0000) or bookmark with nurturing tips (Order No: CA-BK-MARKR). The federal Center for Mental Health Services is an agency of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of

Green ribbons to represent growth, recovery, and strength.



May 16, 2008



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

FIRST STEPS
KENTUCKY'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

TOTS Update

We spent some time this week with First Steps providers talking about billing. The purpose of the conversation was to review from the provider perspective what's involved in billing CBIS and to talk about how that might change when TOTS comes up.

One focus of the conversation was how to streamline the private insurance billing process for providers. While there has been discussion of centralizing private insurance billing, phase I of TOTS development does not include this. Phase I does, however, include some features that are designed to make private insurance billing a little bit easier.

One feature is a Financial screen that will capture and make available to providers on the IFSP Team private insurance information used for billing, including the insurance name, ID number, Group number, subscriber information and contact information. It has also been requested that we include space on the progress note to capture a treating diagnosis code as well as a medical diagnosis code.

Having this information readily available in one place should assist providers when it comes time to submit claims to private insurance companies.



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

Barren River POE Moves to New Location

The Barren River Point of Entry (POE) moved to its new location at 380 Suwannee Trail in Bowling Green on March 31, 2008. Staff are thrilled with their new space!



Barren River POE staff pictured are Melissa Schwartz, Janet Withrow, Sharon Page, Elaine Donnelly, Kay Mackenzie, Beth Vander Molen

New FPG Snapshot

Talking to Children: Why Some Mothers Do It More

Source: FPG Child Development Institute May 8, 2008

Research shows that from a very early age, children are influenced by the manner in which their mothers verbally interact with them. An FPG study published in the May/June 2008 issue of the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* examines how mother and child characteristics might influence the way mothers talk to their infants and demonstrates that mothers can help children overcome some of the risks to language development associated with poverty. A summary of the study is available online at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~snapshots/snap53.pdf>.

To learn more see: Vernon-Feagans, L., Pancsofar, N., Willoughby, M., Odom, E., Quade, A., & Cox, M. (2008) Predictors of maternal language to infants during a picture book task in the home: Family SES, child characteristics and the parenting environment. *The Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29(3), 213-226.



Neuroscience Updates

The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture



A new working paper from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (NSCDC) summarizes the most recent scientific advances in understanding the importance of sensitive periods on brain development, and the implications of those findings for policy. A pre-publication copy is available online at

http://www.developingchild.net/pubs/wp/Timing_Quality_Early_Experiences.pdf